



## Multi-National Corps – Iraq

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### **Soldiers in Mosul celebrate African American history**

#### **Story and photo release**

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MOSUL, Iraq — More than 100 Soldiers took a pause from their work in northern Iraq to turn out for the African American/Black History Celebration at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul Feb. 23.

The hour-long event, organized by Equal Opportunity representatives from the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and Company B, 63<sup>rd</sup> Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 32nd Signal Brigade stationed at Fort Gordon, Ga., featured singing, dancing, prayer, poetry and lectures on history, focusing on the life of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, an early American advocate for African American rights and spokesman for the importance of African American history.

“I think the event is important because it provides everyone with a more insightful look into the strides we as a country have made,” said Staff Sgt. Edward Coleman, Joint Node Network section chief and Equal Opportunity representative for Co. B, 63<sup>rd</sup> Exp. Sig. Bn. “Discussions like the Willie Lynch teachings show us how we can learn from instances from the past.”

Sgt. Charles Smith, motor sergeant with Co. B, 63<sup>rd</sup> Exp. Sig. Bn., gave a lecture on “The Willie Lynch Letter and the Making of a Slave,” an early American “how-to” manual for slaveholders that describes ways to psychologically “break” a slave.

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The event also featured several artistic performances. Spc. Kimberly Miller sang the national anthem and Spc. Elis McBride performed a spiritual song during a slide show depicting photos of slaves and civil rights leaders in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century America. The Transformation Chapel Praise Dance Team and a Co. B, 63<sup>rd</sup> Exp. Sig. Bn., dance team performed cultural dances and several Soldiers recited poetry.

The bulk of the presentation focused on the life and teachings of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a historian, author and journalist born in Virginia in 1875. In 1926, he pioneered the celebration of “Negro History Week” celebrated during the second week in February to coincide with the birthday celebrations for Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglass. That week was later extended to span the entire month of February, which is now recognized as Black History Month.

“Those who have no record of what their forbears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history,” Woodson was quoted as saying during the presentation.

Master Sgt. Gene Jones, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment EO adviser, reiterated Woodson’s philosophy in her opening statements.

“Remember the past and look forward to the future,” she said.

After the presentation, Soldiers helped themselves to a meal served up at the Community Activities Center.

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**080225-0911L-A-001**

Sgt. Charles Smith, mortar sergeant for Company B, 63rd Signal Battalion, delivers an informative lecture Feb. 23 in Mosul about "The Willie Lynch Letter and the Making of a Slave," an early American "how-to" manual for slave owners. Smith's lecture was part of the African American/Black History Month Celebration, held to raise awareness about the past treatment of African Americans. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



**080225-0911L-A-002**

Staff Sgt. Edward Coleman, Master Sgt. Gene Jones and Sgt. Michelle Squire, organizers of the African American/Black History Month Celebration, pose together after the history event in Mosul, Feb. 23. Coleman and Squire are the Equal Opportunity representatives for Co. B, 63rd Signal Battalion. Jones is the Equal Opportunity Adviser for the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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**080225-0911L-A-003**

Master Sgt. Gene Jones, the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment's Equal Opportunity Adviser and one of the event organizers for the African American/ Black History Month Celebration, laughs with a civilian contract worker after the hour-long history event in Mosul, Feb. 23. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



**080225-0911L-A-004**

Members of the Transformation Praise Chapel Dance Team perform on stage at the Community Activities Center at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul Feb. 23. The dancers, all Soldiers with the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, were part of an hour-long event to celebrate African American history. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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